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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a study that examined the thinking of 49 elementary and secondary education student teachers who had completed a curriculum based on a teacher reflection conceptual framework. To investigate the relationship between students' actions and their ideologies (understood as pervasive belief systems and knowledge bases) when incorporating multicultural and global education content, student teacher self-evaluation forms for multicultural education and global education were analyzed. Overall, results suggested that the majority of the sample leaned toward the conservative end of the multicultural spectrum rather than toward a critical multiculturalism necessary for transformative reform of the school curriculum. In terms of global education, 45 percent of the subjects cited an understanding of global education as learning about the interconnection between natural and human systems in the world; 25 percent focused their attention on such issues as conflict, hunger, and environmental pollution, 16 percent on the natural environment, and 14 percent on issues pertaining to other nations and cultures. Survey results showed consistency in student teachers' ideological perspectives on multicultural education and their actions in implementing multicultural content into the curriculum. The data in this study suggested that reflective teacher education programs at their current stage of development may be failing to overcome dominant ahistorical conservative and liberal multicultural ideologies for the majority of their candidates. Programs concerned about critical multicultural and global education may need to create long-term networks for exchanging curricular information on efforts and techniques seeking to overcome dominant ideologies. (Contains 31 references.) (ND)

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Paper presented at the 48th Annual Meeting
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Preservice Teacher Acquisition of a Critical Multicultural and Global Perspective: A Reform Path with Ideological Tensions

by Michael Vavrus & Mustafa Ozcan

The inclusion of a multicultural, global perspective into the K-12 curriculum by means of teachers educated reflectively is an element within larger school reform efforts focusing on education in a pluralistic society. How to reach this goal of a culturally responsive teaching force through teacher education remains enigmatic. The dilemma for reformers is heightened because most teacher education programs give cursory attention to multicultural and global education by failing to address systematically "the issues of racial and ethnic diversity, socio-economic and social-class disparities, and gender discrimination" (Grant, 1993, p. 41).

Research is encouraging neither on the transformative potential of a single multicultural course in the preparation curriculum nor for field experiences in culturally diverse settings which operate within the dominance of an Eurocentric orientation toward schooling (Grant & Secada, 1990). Even when multicultural information that reduces the stereotyping attitudes of preservice teachers is included in the teacher preparation curriculum (Tran, Young, & DiLella, 1994), both student teachers and practitioners generally do not demonstrate competence in applying a curricular knowledge base with multiple perspectives on the interconnectedness of various cultures' histories (Banks, 1993b, 1994; Garcia & Pugh, 1992; Vavrus, 1994). Thus, taking a critical approach to the enactment of multicultural and global education is increasingly being recognized as a focal point for transformative reform of both the K-12 and teacher education curriculum (Banks, 1993b, 1994; McLaren, 1994, 1995; Johnson & Ochoa, 1993; Vavrus & Ozcan, 1995).

To move preservice teachers toward a critical perspective appears wrought with ideological barriers for teachers becoming practitioners of curriculum transformation, a topic that has lacked systematic examination from a global and multicultural perspective (Johnson & Ochoa, 1993). Limitations range from the ultimate control of school boards over the curriculum and the reluctance of teachers to move beyond the prescribed curriculum to a general lack of understanding among teachers about the implications and means for transforming the curriculum in a multicultural direction (Vavrus & Ozcan, 1995). Compounding restrictions on teacher involvement in curriculum development is the socially constructed nature of the school curriculum and the

competing political forces seeking to shape it, acutely so in the volatile domain of multicultural education. The complexities located in the interactions between ideology and teacher notions of professional practice emerge during the preservice education period. As Sleeter (1991) observed,

> Helping [education] students articulate, critically examine, and develop their own beliefs and action agendas for emancipation of oppressed people is very difficult; it is not discussed sufficiently by multicultural education practitioners or theorists. (p. 22)

Additionally, global education "is replete with difficult moral and social issues. How teachers make sense of issues and arguments is likely to influence how they teach" (Johnson & Ochoa, 1993, p. 67). These sense-making processes are confounded by cultural values, political ideologies, and social class background (Barnett, 1993; McLaren, 1995; Nel, 1992; Waldrip, 1995). The task, therefore, for practitioner preparation programs seeking to deepen critical reflection among teacher education students appears strewn with ideological tensions emanating from complex social psychological interactions. In this context we understand ideologies as pervasive belief systems and knowledge bases which significantly impact on the acquired expertise of teachers in a manner described by Popkewitz (1994):

> Professional knowledges are not only knowledges that describe the world but are systems of ideas and practices that authorize how people find out who they are and what they are in society. (p. 7)

Our working assumption extends to viewing the eventual professional practices of teachers as inseparable from their ideologies in how they mediate knowledge to their pupils, in this case multicultural and global content.

At a fundamental level teacher reflection is understood as necessary for effective reform as evidenced by the initiative of chief state school officers in the development of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) with principles pertaining to reflection (Board of Educational Examiners, 1994; Interstate New Teacher, 1992). Teacher education programs which attempt to structure the professional education curriculum on models of teacher reflection have an opportunity to engage in program transformation based on a critical orientation toward global and multicultural education (Johnson & Ochoa, 1993; Valli, 1992). The promising practice of professional reflection ideally would yield teacher candidates who could move beyond

the technical requirements of instruction to deeper considerations and actions on complex, multidimensional topics such as global and multicultural education. Teacher educators as a group, however, do not have a history of reflecting on these topics (Gilliom, 1993). Additionally, case studies of programs purporting to encourage reflection reveal that the tendency in even these programs is to avoid issues related to social and political curriculum transformation (Beyer & Zeichner, 1987; Valli, 1992; Zeichner, 1992).

The particular teacher education program in our study adopted a teacher-reflection model which included a critical social element intended, as collectively defined by the faculty, to focus the curriculum more sharply on issues of social transformation by taking

> into consideration the interaction between the school and the socio-political environment in which it exists. This perspective requires a critical approach to looking at the existing environment. Reflective teachers thoughtfully question *status quo* arrangements and consider alternative visions and actions. Reflective teachers affirm as essential an awareness of a critical social perspective on all professional decision making. (Vavrus, 1993, p. 1)

Despite the program's focused multicultural education course and an overt inclusion of a critical social perspective across the teacher education curriculum, research on both student teacher and cooperating teachers approaches to multicultural content in the school curriculum indicates that curriculum transformation from a critical social orientation is generally misinterpreted or resisted (Vavrus, 1994; Vavrus & Ozcan, 1995). These results suggest that the need exists to delve further into the belief systems of preservice teachers to discover how their ideological perspectives may be interacting with curricular goals of teacher education programs striving to develop reflective teachers holding a sense of critical agency. Better understanding the degree to which teacher education students acquire a critical global and multicultural perspective would enrich the reform-oriented element of the teacher education knowledge base.

The purpose of our study is to gain a deeper insight into the thinking of teacher education students who have completed a curriculum based on a teacher reflection conceptual framework. In particular we seek to determine their ideologically approach to critical global and multicultural content infusion during the final phase of their preservice experience.

Methodology

To investigate the relationship between teacher education student actions and their ideological beliefs when incorporating multicultural and global education content, student teacher self-evaluation forms for multicultural education and global education were analyzed. The forms represent the entire sample of student teachers, 49, from the Fall 1994 semester and includes teacher education students practicing in both elementary and secondary school settings. The determination of the final student teaching grade was independent of the responses provided on the self-evaluation forms. By keeping the answers separate from the actual performance assessment, the desire was to increase the validity of the responses by having student teachers feel as free as possible to describe their experiences.

The first areas of qualitative content analyses were applied to the responses student teachers had written to open-ended questions pertaining to their own understandings and applications of multicultural and global education. Student teacher responses were compared to Grant and Sleeter's (1993), Banks's (1993a), and McLaren's (1994) respective categorizations of ideological approaches to multicultural education. For Grant and Sleeter's (1993) the perspectives include "teaching the exceptional and culturally different," "human relations approach," "single-group studies," "multicultural education approach," and "education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist" (see pp. 52-58). Banks's (1993a) curriculum constructs go from approaches that are contributive and additive to transformative and social action oriented. McLaren's (1994) spectrum of ideological forms ranges from "conservative multiculturalism" and "liberal multiculturalism" to "left-liberal multiculturalism" and "critical and resistance multiculturalism" (see pp. 47-55).

Grant and Sleeter's (1993) multicultural education approach and multicultural social reconstructionism, Banks's (1993a) transformative and social action curricular approaches, and McLaren's (1994) critical multiculturalism are conceptualized as qualitative categories representing critical approaches to multicultural education. The transformative content of these forms are congruent with framing multiculturalism as an extension of the Civil Rights political movement (see Watkins, 1994). A teacher education program utilizing critical multicultural and global

education with a social reconstructionist goal ideally "would promote social structural equality and cultural pluralism and prepare its graduate to work actively toward social structural equality" (Grant, 1993, p. 48).

Next, we analyzed the responses of the sample regarding their understanding and infusion of global education themes into the curriculum. Based on the state of Iowa A Guide for Integrating Global Education Across the Curriculum (Iowa Department of Education, 1989), teacher education student responses were initially categorized according to the following themes: (1) global interdependence; (2) human resources, values, and culture; (3) global environment and natural resources; (4) global peace and conflict management; and (5) change and alternative futures. Student responses were further categorized according to repeating themes in their definitions/explanations of global education. Only the theme most emphasized was taken from each response.

Global education themes have not experienced the same scrutiny and research in the development of categories on an ideological spectrum as in the case of multicultural education (Johnson & Ochoa, 1993) and, therefore, did not provide our content analysis with an accessible rubric. Recognizing the interrelationship between global education and multicultural education, though, we critiqued student teacher responses and the state of Iowa global education guidelines in relationship to the multicultural ideological forms conceived by Grant and Sleeter (1993), Banks (1993a), and McLaren (1994) as outlined above. By taking this methodological approach, we anticipated that the discourse on critical multiculturalism could be expanded to address particular global education orientations, especially those utilized by preservice teachers practicing under state-defined global education themes and goals.

Results

Multicultural Education

Subjects provided responses which often fell into more than one multicultural education definition category. The largest group of definitions, 43%, of the meaning of multicultural education occurred in the category of single group studies. The second largest group, 31%, reflected a human relations approach followed by 20% suggesting a multicultural education approach (Grant & Sleeter, 1993). Finally, a small group of definitions, 6%, did not correspond

with any known category. There were no definitions/explanations matching Grant and Sleeter's (1993) perspectives of social reconstructionism or teaching the culturally different. It would be misleading to infer, however that the 20% of the responses falling into a "multicultural education approach" held a critical reform orientation since over half of that stratification (61%) favored definitions contrary to a critical multiculturalism.

Most of the subjects marked more than one of Banks's (1993a) approaches. Out of a total of 91 citations, 43% favored an additive approach. The second largest mentioned approach, 30%, was the contribution approach. Next, 18% preferred approaches to make the curriculum multicultural through the transformation approach. The social action approach to reforming the curriculum was the least preferred approach at 10%. Since the subjects preferred both the transformative and social action approaches together with some others, we were unable to determine the rank of importance in their preferences, thus making the determination of their commitment to these approaches somewhat ambiguous.

Overall the results of the multicultural explanations and definitions from teacher education students suggest that the vast majority of the sample at the conclusion of their practitioner preparation program lean toward McLaren's (1994) conservative end of the multicultural spectrum rather than to a critical multiculturalism necessary for transformative reform of the school curriculum.

Global Education

Nearly one-half, 45%, of the subjects cited a curriculum implementation preference for the theme of global interdependence, that is, an understanding of global education as learning about the interconnection between natural and human systems in the world. The second largest category, 25%, was an expressed concern about the world, focusing their attention on such issues as conflict, hunger, and the environmental pollution. Next, 16%, indicated a curricular interest in the natural environment. The smallest group, 14%, emphasized issues pertaining to other nations and cultures. For this latter segment of the sample global education was defined primarily as learning and respecting other peoples and cultures in the world.

Three of the four categories -- global interdependence, the natural environment, and other nations and cultures -- represented 75% of the sample. For these preservice teachers, global

education implied teaching about nature, other cultures, and the world in general. Some emphasized environmental issues, others noted the interconnection between people and nature, and some stressed the importance of learning about the other people and culture. Their responses, however, give an impression of accepting the global status quo, perceiving the primary curricular goal as "learning about the world."

The 25% in the remaining category of "concern about the world" appeared to have acquired a somewhat different concept of global education than their peers. The differentiation stems from an awareness of world problems and the need to find solutions. The subjects in this category emphasized the interaction among nations where national decisions may negatively impact other countries or may create global problems. For example, one student wrote that global education "will empower the student to think beyond the US....It is about learning about other cultures and finding interconnection between the US and the world." Although it might be an overstatement to label this approach to global education as critical, this kind of problem-solving concern for the world may be conceptualized as moving towards critical global education.

Using the state of Iowa themes (Iowa Department of Education, 1989), 25% of the responses corresponded to the topic of global environment and natural resources; 25% human resources, values, and culture; 24% global interdependence; 16% change and alternative future; and 11% global peace and conflict management. In all of the thematic categories developed by the state of Iowa there is an underlying focus: Teaching students about the world, nature, people, and resources. However, the state guidelines lack overt attention to curriculum transformation with a critical perspective for examining the distribution of natural or political resources, the source of the problems associated with natural and social systems, global power structures, and the possibilities to create a better world for all people. Using a social reconstructionist approach applied to critical global education would necessitate, for example, teacher education students from the dominant culture becoming "capable of examining why their group exclusively enjoys the social and financial rewards" (Grant & Sleeter, p. 56) of a global society.

Summary of Results

Survey results show that student teachers are consistent in their thinking between their ideological perspective toward multicultural education and their actions in implementing

multicultural content into the curriculum (Vavrus, 1994). Nearly all, 98%, of the student teacher responses at some point indicated curricular approaches matching ideological orientations favoring human relations and single-group studies (Grant & Sleeter, 1993) and conservative and liberal multiculturalism (McLaren, 1994). These particular ideological orientations as enacted in curriculum practice generally attended to the salient characteristics and contributions of racial minorities and women, but do not address the larger socio-political context of the relationship of subjected groups to the dominant culture. Minority and female cultural contributions were treated primarily as add-ons to the curriculum.

Approximately 25% of the students also applied multiple approaches and crossed into curriculum transformation and reflected ideological forms in the categories of the multicultural education approach (Grant & Sleeter, 1993) and, to some extent, left-liberal multiculturalism and critical and resistance multiculturalism (McLaren, 1994). None of the sample enacted a curriculum responding to social action, an expectation within social reconstructionist multiculturalism (Grant & Sleeter, 1993) and critical and resistance multiculturalism (McLaren, 1994).

The pattern between global education themes and multicultural education forms was inconclusive. However, an analysis of the global education themes and goals suggests that the state (Iowa Department of Education, 1989) has generally taken an additive and contributions curricular approach (Banks, 1993a) and lacks specific goals for curriculum transformation.

Discussion

Called into question is a teacher education curriculum based on a reflective conceptual framework infused with a critical social perspective and intended for preservice teachers to gain both an understanding and the skills necessary for multicultural transformation of the K-12 curriculum. The vast majority of the student teachers fell into the uncritical categories of single-group studies, human relations, and conservative or liberal multiculturalism. These domains do not meet the criteria for a critical perspective because conservative multiculturalism and single-group studies look at culture through an Eurocentric lens while simply adding on to the dominant conceptions of the curriculum. Liberal multicultural and human relations ideologies tend to advocate "an ethnocentric and oppressive universalistic humanism" (McLaren, 1994, p. 51) which legitimates and privileges Euro-American political and cultural norms. If future teachers enact

value-laden multicultural and global education as primarily politically neutral topics in which different cultures are simply described or global phenomena are presented as having a distant relationship to one's immediate context, reflective models of teacher education at their current stage of development and design are apparently failing to overcome dominant ahistorical conservative and liberal multicultural ideologies for the vast majority of their candidates.

Reflective teacher education programs concerned about critical multicultural and global education may need to create long-term networks for exchanging curricular information, efforts, and techniques which seek to overcome dominate ideologies which are resistant to realizing social and political justice as played out in the school curriculum. Teacher educators must expand the knowledge base from which they draw to include a rethinking of the nature and role of ideology within a framework of cultural transmission through the pervasiveness of mass communications and popular culture (see McLaren, 1995; Stam & Shohat, 1994; Thompson, 1990). Teacher social definitions of the parameters of their professional work need to be further reexamined in the context of critical social goals.

For multicultural and global education we, too, need to present not only critical perspectives on schooling and have our teacher education students reflect on these concepts; we will have to engage preservice teachers in a deeper interrogation of the actual enactment of the curriculum and how their belief systems will mediate the organization and content of their teaching. Since waiting until the student teaching phase is too far into the teacher education program to instill a posture of critical reflection, especially on curricular issues surrounding multicultural education (Zeichner & Liston, 1987), the need exists to deepen multicultural reflection throughout the curriculum. The politically charged nature of the challenge to a Eurocentric curriculum, however, can not be minimized if teacher educators in reflective programs acknowledge that

> Eurocentrism sanitizes Western history while patronizing and even demonizing the non-West; it thinks of itself in terms of noblest achievements -- science, progress, humanism -- but of the non-West in terms of its deficiencies, real or imagined. (Stam & Shohat, 1994, p. 298)

Professional educators with reflective teacher models may be framing global and multicultural education as unambiguous concepts which eliminate contradictory knowledge from

the preservice curriculum. Popkewitz (1994) cautions those of us engaged in reflective notions of teaching by highlighting the "need to ask what systems of ideas organize how we construct the objects that we are calling schooling, children, teaching, learn, and so on" (p. 13). For example, the reform language of such national initiatives as the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) (Board of Educational Examiners, 1994; Interstate New Teacher, 1992) can be examined for ideological assumptions. The INTASC standards (Interstate New Teacher, 1992) tend to take a limited human relations approach to diversity as evidenced by the following expected teacher attitude:

> The teacher appreciates the cultural dimensions of communication, responds appropriately, and seeks to foster culturally sensitive communication by and among all students in the class. (p. 21)

On the surface this is a laudable goal, but it could be construed as merely keeping the lid on a boiling kettle of discrimination by avoiding the deeper roots of the problem. A further review of the INTASC (1992) knowledge, dispositional, and performance expectations does not reveal direct attention to the need for multicultural and global across-the-curriculum transformation. Since the standards are generally dependent on the pupil composition of a particular classroom and the cultural context of a community, such as "The teacher is sensitive to community and cultural norms" (p. 15), a teacher might avoid teaching critical multiculturalism if the "community and cultural norms" support a social system infused with sexism and racism. Although the INTASC standards (1992) and state interpretations of them in the positivist reform language of a "renaissance" for teacher licensure (Board of Educational Examiners, 1994) appear to advance the professionalism of teaching, the INTASC language lends itself to varied interpretations, especially when looking at them through the wide-angle lens of a critical social perspective.

Curriculum transformation from a critical multicultural perspective challenges the worth and purpose of the indeterminate language of reflection such as articulated in the following INTASC principle (1992):

> The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and action on others.. and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally. (p. 27)

Such a diffusion of meaning provides little social direction for the beginning teacher under an INTASC ideology asking the prospective beginning teacher being evaluated by the reflection principle to somehow "recognize his/her responsibility for engaging in and supporting appropriate professional practices for self and colleagues" (p. 27). What is meant by "responsibility" and "appropriate" are unclear unless we assume that the INTASC (1992) preamble calling for teachers to help in developing students who can ensure the United States' "competitive position in a global economy" (p. 8) is the real message being transmitted to new teachers. With such an ideological foundation reflective space for critical multicultural education is limited for teachers.

In contrast to the INTASC approach, Darling-Hammond's (1992) Standards of Practice for Learner-Center Schools emphasizes the development of professional accountability tied to a form of teacher competence which is aimed at ensuring that:

> • Where knowledge about appropriate practices exists, it will be used in making decisions; and
>
> • Where certainty about appropriate practice does not exist, practitioners will -- individually and collectively, through inquiry and consultation -- continually seek to discover the most responsible course of action. (p. 14)

The striking divergence of Darling-Hammond's concepts rests on the accountability of the teacher, and in our case teacher educators, to apply research-based practices and to commit to building a practical knowledge base where research is lacking. Professional accountability of this nature applied to global and multicultural curriculum transformation implies that teacher educators intent on transformative reform ought to be providing preservice teachers the knowledge, dispositions, and performance skills to act critically as curriculum developers and implementers.

The work of education faculties acting within critically reflective teacher education curriculum models will need to acknowledge the complexity of their task by broadening their knowledge bases and collaborating with like-minded teacher educators to find instructional approaches for overcoming preservice teacher ideologies that accept the need for racial and cultural harmony but fail to take into account the pressing social and political needs of those groups who are denied full access and participation in the socio-economic rewards currently enjoyed by the dominant culture. Reform within teacher education does hold the promise of contributing to a

more equitable society since increased education may reduce overt racial prejudice among the white majority. Nevertheless, we need to be mindful that this attitude does not necessarily extent to support for political programs designed to overcome economic and social inequality among the disenfranchised (Sigelman & Welch, 1991). Concluding, however, that teacher resistance to critical multicultural and global education is based simply on how teachers perceive curriculum innovations and mandates (Tye & Tye, 1993) is reductionist in its lack of acknowledgment of the force of political ideologies within our schools. Historically schools of education have not seen their missions tied to providing preservice teachers with the intellectual and technical skills necessary for taking public positions on thorny social and moral issues (Spring, 1986). This social transmission role of teacher education has resulted in producing teachers who find that by "identifying themselves as spokespersons for -- or representatives of -- the [present socio-political] system in its local manifestation, they avoid interrogation and critique" (Greene 1978, p. 56). Beyond even the current wave of experiments with reflective paradigms, the task of moving preservice teachers to critical orientations will involve no small challenge to the historically embedded cultural norms of teacher education programs. The goal of transformative multicultural and global education, therefore, will remain as an important but formidable reform task in the continuing contribution to the development of an equitable society in a pluralistic nation.

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